





## EXISTING ALLIANCES AND A LEAGUE OF PEACE.

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The war has converted the belligerent world to that kind of pacifism which consists in a grim determination that the present Armageddon shall never be repeated, however long it may be necessary to fight in order to ensure this outcome. To perpetuate the peace, however, a strong League of Nations is indispensable, and various plans for such a league are forming. Some of these rely on an extension of treaties of arbitration and conciliation; some would fortify these treaties by giving to the league a power to coerce recalcitrant members, and still others would create a world state with a central government, an army and a navy. The first question to be answered is, What kind of international union *can* be secured? since, in the case of any new league of this kind, the more ambitious the plan, the less probable it is that nations will adopt it. In many minds grave doubt exists whether even a modest plan will be carried into execution. In the face of this doubt I wish to express the audacious opinion that something having the characteristics of a league of peace is rapidly evolving and in all probability will, at the close of the war, require only a small modification to enable it to prevent, so long as it lasts, the recurrence of a great war on the Continent of Europe.

It is not necessary to create a league of peace *de novo* and without reference to combinations which now exist. Two great leagues have been formed,

each embracing powerful states and each so firmly held together that it acts toward the outer world much as a single great empire would do. Since they are now waging against each other the greatest war in history, the conclusion is much too lightly reached that such unions are, *by their nature*, war-breeders. Defensive unions, however, are in line with the whole trend of political evolution. Great nations, created by combining smaller ones, are in the order of the day, and so are federations of a looser kind, such as those which preceded the German Empire and our own Federal State.

Every such consolidation involves a risk that, if a war occurs, it will be larger than it might otherwise be; but it reduces the frequency with which wars occur. Peace between great states continues through longer periods than it does between warring districts which later unite in such states. The prospect that peace shall ever be universal depends on its tendency to establish itself within larger and larger areas till it shall end by embracing the world. European wars have occurred in spite of alliances rather than because of them and the general effect even of imperfect unions has been to lengthen the intervals of peace. It is an even century since a war akin to this one was waging in Europe, and it is forty-four years since a war between any two great nations has taken place on that continent. The consolidating tendency in itself makes for peace.

The present leagues have several times acted as peace preservers. During the Moroccan trouble and the two Balkan wars they averted a general struggle and they might have averted the present one *if, as*

*unions, they had been more complete than they were.* It is a safe guess that if it had been definitely known that Russia, France and England would act as a unit in opposing the invasion of Serbia, the knowledge would have delayed the invasion and possibly prevented it with all its fateful consequences. The first thing to be remembered is that these two great leagues, both formed for defense, will be in existence and probably vigorous when the war shall end.

Let us assume that peace has been made, that both the Entente and the Alliance continue to be strong and that in everything political they are the powers which must first be reckoned with. Let us assume that, in each of them, the constituent countries are held firmly together because no single country can think of surrendering the protection which union affords. Outside of the Entente, France would be helpless against an attack by Germany and outside of the Alliance Austria would be helpless against one by Italy and Russia. Any country standing alone would have a precarious hold on its territory and its freedom.

The chief dangers that threaten a great league spring from within, while those that threaten a small league are from without. A union of all Europe would be entirely immune against foreign attack and, *for that very reason*, would be far more easily disrupted and plunged into something like civil war. Such unions as the Alliance and the Entente, each of which has a great power now arrayed against it, are held together much more firmly. The bond that unites its members is the imperative need of mutual protection.

If, as we have assumed, the war has ended neither in a draw nor in a sweeping victory for one side—if the unsuccessful league has kept most of its territories and its fighting strength—the situation will throw an enormous power into the hands of the neutral states. By joining either union they might cause it to preponderate over the other; and by joining the victorious one they could make it safe against any attack and able, if it were disposed to do so, to guarantee the peace of Europe. In the smaller states of Europe the opinion is growing that for them liberty and union are one and inseparable. It may be vital for them to join a defensive league and, by their union with it, cause it to become, if it were not already, a true commonwealth of nations, great and small, and fully committed to a just and peaceful policy.

In order to be a nucleus of such a commonwealth a league should, if possible, already contain enough great states to prevent any one from dominating the others. If possible it should contain a number of the smaller states and, as a group, it should be so free from aggressive designs as to merit the confidence of states not as yet in any combination. Since the Entente now virtually includes five great states and four small ones and may soon be joined by more it already has important qualifications for becoming such a league of Peace as we are suggesting—a commonwealth of nations powerful enough to preserve peace and vitally interested in doing it.

The original purpose of each of the two leagues now existing was protective. It aimed primarily to secure each of its members against attacks by other

powers, and this security, which all the members continue to need, is what the small neutral countries are also compelled to look for. What they must demand of any combination which they are asked to join is, above all else, protection. Now the more promising plans for new leagues of peace which have been suggested contain no provision for protecting their members from attacks by nations outside of their circle. They content themselves with preventing warfare between the members. On the other hand, the present combinations have no formal and constitutional machinery for settling internal disputes. A true commonwealth of nations needs to be assured against both dangers and its constitution, therefore, will need to contain the best provisions that it is humanly possible to devise for settling peacefully all internal disputes and also for preventing or repelling attacks by other states. This is saying that an enlarged Entente, besides protecting its members, as it is now using all its force in doing, will need to guard itself against the perils that necessarily beset large leagues, those, namely, that originate from within. The institutions of The Hague will be for it well nigh a *sine qua non* of success, and there must be measures for compelling a resort to them in disputes between members of the league and in those arising between any of them and states outside of it. Such provisions as have been contained in the best constitutions that have been suggested for new leagues will be needed in one that may evolve out of one of the existing combinations.

If a new league should be formed without affording protection against external attacks it would be

necessary that the Entente and the Alliance should continue. It would be vain to ask their members to dissolve them and trust to a new league that would leave each of them to fight its own battles. The Entente or the Alliance, as the case might be, would then constitute a union within a union—a compact defensive body within a loosely organized combination for promoting the friendly settlement of disputes. This is entirely possible. A new league of many states might conceivably be formed and either the Entente or the Alliance might join it bodily and give its own members the protection which the larger league would not give; but a simpler and more natural plan would be to enlarge one of the present leagues and adopt the needed provisions for peacefully settling all disputes of which a member is a party.

Of a league so formed the objection that it is theoretical and utopian certainly cannot be urged. Nine countries are already in effect in the Entente and that combination is now fulfilling the one function that, in making constitutions for new leagues, few persons are bold enough to require of the members—that of lavishing life and treasure in defending each other. In this respect, the present reality outstrips our dreams. As the leagues will almost certainly continue it should be possible to give to one of them the relatively easy function of settling peacefully the disputes occurring within its membership.

Herein lies the golden opportunity for the neutral states. They have a sense of danger and the protective feature of a league will attract them, though the chance of being involved in a general war will, in itself, repel them. It will probably repel them less than



the danger of being conquered by some great state, and both dangers will be at a minimum if the international body that they join is too strong to be attacked and if its spirit as well as its formal constitution and the interest of its members hold it in ways of peace and justice. It will be in the power of the neutral countries to help effectively in making it so. They can consent to join only a union of this character.

It will be hard indeed for the two leagues now in deadly war with each other at once to unite in any single union. Will the fact that one of them for a time holds aloof be a source of danger? In one essential way it will be a cause of security. It is sadly to be admitted that, in the present moral status of the world, treaties are not bands of steel and there is danger that they may be broken when they are not buttressed by national interests. Against the danger of disruption a defensive league which does not include all states of Europe may be stronger than one which does so. The treaty that binds such a league together will be powerfully reenforced if all the members have a sense of common danger—a sense of the presence of a foe strong enough to overcome any country singly. Pressure from without means solidarity within and, while enmities are strong, a hostile nation might impart to a league more strength by remaining outside of it than by joining it.

- In the long run, all Europe should be consolidated. The chance that it will become so by a single step is small, and the best beginning of a general union will be furnished by one of the existing leagues, enlarged by the adherence of neutral states and fortified against

the danger of disruption from within by the exposure of any seceding state to the peril of attacks from without. The league may thrive on external hostility until the good time shall come when the desired system of settling international disputes shall be thoroughly established and peace shall prevail by the supremacy of reason. Guarding always the territory and protecting the sovereignty of its members the league will develop mutual interests so important that a new and powerful tie will bind the countries together in addition to the bond furnished by the necessity for defense. That necessity itself will grow less, armaments may be curtailed and the forces now engaged in mutual destruction may become available for raising in many ways the level of human life. Under such influences the league should become too powerful to be attacked from without and too indispensable to humanity to be weakened or disrupted from within.

For these reasons I conclude that in the leagues now at war may be afforded the most practical means of creating the league of peace. There is inspiration in this possibility and there is a terrible spur to action in what will ensue if it is not realized—desolated lands under enormous debts with no assurance against a further struggle; neutral lands as well as belligerent ones involved in the competition for larger armies, navies, arsenals, guns and fortifications; the people demanding costly reforms by governments unable to afford them and in peril of revolution if they refuse to do so. Only in the relief from war and its burdens lies the possibility of meeting such needs and giving to social progress an upward trend. Such is the plain teaching of the pending struggle. It is as though the

war demon himself had led humanity to the parting of the roads where the guide boards indicate, on the one side, the long way to the Delectable Mountains and on the other, a short route to the pit. Far reaching beyond all precedent is the choice that humanity must soon make and lands at war and lands at peace must participate in the decision.

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## PRESIDENT WILSON'S APPEAL FOR IMPARTIALITY AND RESTRAINT IN DIS- CUSSING THE WAR

MY FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN: I suppose that every thoughtful man in America has asked himself during the last troubled weeks what influence the European war may exert upon the United States, and I take the liberty of addressing a few words to you in order to point out that it is entirely within our own choice what its effects upon us will be and to urge very earnestly upon you the sort of speech and conduct which will best safeguard the nation against distress and disaster.

The effect of the war upon the United States will depend upon what American citizens say or do. Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned. The spirit of the nation in this critical matter will be determined largely by what individuals and society and those gathered in public meetings do and say, upon what newspapers and magazines contain, upon what our ministers utter in their pulpits and men proclaim as their opinions on the streets.

The people of the United States are drawn from many nations, and chiefly from the nations now at war. It is natural and inevitable that there should be the utmost variety of sympathy and desire among them with regard to the issues and circumstances of the conflict. Some will wish one nation, others another, to succeed in the momentous struggle. It will be easy to excite passion and difficult to allay it. Those responsible for exciting it will assume a heavy responsibility; responsibility for no less a thing than that the people of the United States, whose love of their country and whose loyalty to its Government should unite them as Americans all, bound in honor and affection to think first of her and her interests, may be divided in camps of hostile opinions, hot against each other, involved in the war itself in impulse and opinion, if not in action. Such diversions among us would be fatal to our peace of mind and might seriously stand in the way of the proper performance of our duty as the one great nation at peace, the one people holding itself ready to play a part of impartial mediation and speak the counsels of peace and accommodation, not as a partisan, but as a friend.

I venture, therefore, my fellow-countrymen, to speak a solemn word of warning to you against that deepest, most subtle, most essential breach of neutrality which may spring out of partisanship, out of passionately taking sides. The United States must be neutral in fact as well as in name during these days that are to try men's souls. We must be impartial in thought as well as in action, must put a curb upon our sentiments as well as upon every transaction that might be construed as a preference of one party to the struggle before another.

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